

**DRAFT  
Select Board  
Update**

**October 20, 2025**

## **Town Meeting Study Committee**

- Survey Highlights
- SoTT approach

# Survey 566 responses – is it representative?

Age: Respondents vs Registered Voters

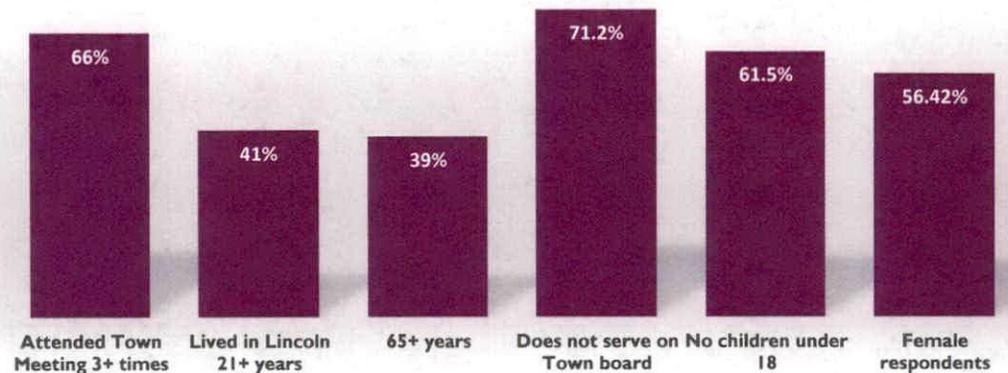
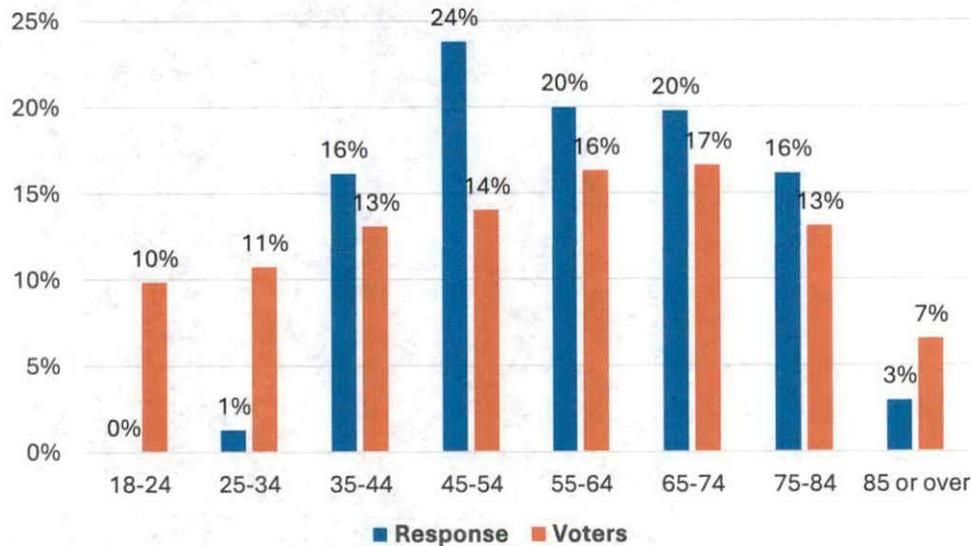


Fig. 1.2. Snapshot of respondents who attended Lincoln Town Meeting in the past five years.

- 82 (15%) have not attended TM in the last 5 years
- 89 (16% of those who answered) have lived in Lincoln 5 years or less
- 55 (12%) have children under 5; 128 (27%) have children ages 5-12
- 331 (69%) White, 28 (6%) 2 or more races, 19 (4%) Asian, 4 (1%) Other, 1 Black, 94 (20%) prefer not to say.

# Survey Key Takeaways

- Overall Satisfaction with TM:
  - 26% Satisfied or Very Satisfied
  - 29% Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied
  - 15% Neutral or No Opinion
  - 30% Comments (Mostly negative: length, voting process, Town Official bias)
- Purpose of TM: Cast an informed vote (57%), Debate and decide important Town issues (54%)
- Does TM serve the purposes most important to you: 41% No, 22% Not sure or no opinion
- Town Meeting Date: 50% Saturday, 23% weeknight

# Survey Key Takeaways

- Top 2 information sources for TM are unofficial channels: LT (54%), Friends/Neighbors/Orgs I trust (50%); Warrant article is 3<sup>rd</sup> (39%)  
Town Website ranks last (9%)
- 56% feel adequately informed to vote when they arrive at TM, 34% sometimes
- 32% have changed their opinion at TM because of a presentation, 35% because of a citizen comment
- Top reasons people do not attend TM or leave early:
  - Schedule conflict (61%)
  - Meeting is too long (51%)
  - Uncertainty of voting time (16%)
  - Other (19%) – childcare, bias of leadership

# Survey Key Takeaways

- Changes that would benefit TM:
  - 73% Pro/Con Summary for Warrant Articles
  - 54% Pro/Con formally presented at TM from the podium
  - 45% Shorter time limits on presentations
- Town Meeting Voting Approach
  - 37% current approach
  - 35% scheduled time, different day
  - 15% schedule time, same day
  - 14% Other – electronic voting, ballot voting on a different day
- Clickers: overwhelming support, 95% for all or some votes
- SOTT: 32% have never attended, 34% once or twice; When input is solicited, it can provide a “sense of who is there”, not relied upon to provide a “sense of the Town”

## Survey – Other Comments: 272 of them!

- Voting - More Accessible, Transparent, and Modernized (80+)
- TM Process Is Perceived as Unfair, Biased, and Undemocratic (70+)
- Need for Equal Opportunity for Pro and Con Arguments (60+)
- TM Length, Structure, and Moderation Require Improvement (60+)
- Timing and Scheduling Are Major Barriers to Participation (60+)
- Desire for a More Efficient, Respectful, and Inclusive TM (50+)
- Desire for Greater Transparency and Pre-Meeting Information (30+)
- Democratic Accountability and Respect for Diverse Views Are Lacking (30+)
- Flexibility, Multiple Voting Options Would Increase Participation (25+)

## Clicker Questions for SOTT

- I am supportive of remote participation and remote voting at Town Meeting
- For controversial issues, I am supportive of holding deliberations on one day and voting on a separate day
- For controversial issues, I am supportive of holding a Special Town Meeting, where that is the sole issue on the agenda
- For controversial issues, I prefer:
  - Current approach: debate, immediately followed by a vote
  - Hold deliberations on one day, vote on a separate day
  - Hold a Special Town Meeting, where that is the sole issue on the agenda

## Clicker Questions for SOTT

- I believe that all presenters should have a visible timer
- I believe that there should be separate Pro, Con and Question microphones during the citizen comment period
- I believe that any speaker should declare if they have a conflict of interest (financial, abutter, etc.)